

**Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks Reception in Honor of Women's Congress  
September 13, 2012, 19:00, CMR**

I wish to thank President Komorowski and all Poles for their condolences and their solidarity. America has no better friend than Poland, and especially at times like these.

It is fitting that we are holding this event tonight. People in this room, during Poland's bold and skillful transition, and during ongoing transitions in countries in south Asia and in central and eastern Europe, have put themselves in harm's way, and have made and many continue to make great personal sacrifices for causes they believe in.

The news of recent days only enforces our determination to continue to stand up for what we believe. So I'm so proud to host all of you, and that my Embassy is able to lend a helping hand to the work you do.

Today's event is international and intergenerational.

Let me begin with those who are here from far away. I am very honored to be able to host a distinguished delegation of Afghan leaders – women who have distinguished themselves in the area of business, education, women's rights, human rights, and development. They are:

1. **Shukria Azadmanesh**, a researcher with Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unity, working on Women's Economic Security and Rights
2. **Malina Fahiz**, who founded her own NGO in 2007 to begin projects for women's education in Afghanistan and now is the Director of the Afghan Women Education Network
3. **Masuma Ibrahimi**, the Director of the Afghan Cultural House, which provides services and opportunities to women and youth who were isolated or abandoned,

4. **Ms. Najia Anwari**, the Project Manager of the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, which promotes the reconstruction and rehabilitation of society and socio-economic development, and encourages active participation of women in society through targeted education and training facilities and activities.
5. **Ms. Husna Mohammadi**, a student of computer science in Kabul, teacher of English and computer literacy and an Administrative Assistant with the Personnel for Social Development, a Canadian-funded Afghan NGO

From central and eastern Europe, we have women actively engaged in bringing democracy and human rights and women's rights to their countries in transition in

With support from the State Department, Vital Voices Polska has brought a delegation of 15 women business leaders to Poland from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia. Over a period of sixteen days these women will meet with women business leaders, take special business classes, receive media training, and, of course, attend the Women's Congress.

Welcome Agnieszka Bilińska.

And, from throughout Poland, we have great leaders, women who will be attending the magnificent 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of Women. It has become a tradition to host you here, and we are glad to be doing it again.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the fourth annual Congress of Women. Thanks to the outstanding leadership of Henryka Bochniarz, and so many other women gathered here tonight, the Congress of Women has become an increasingly important player in Polish political and social life. After successfully passing the “Parity Law” through parliament, the Congress of Women is actively pushing to make that legislation stronger and ensure that women have an equal shot at elected office.

And the Embassy is actively committed to supporting the Congress of Women's good work. Last year, the Embassy sponsored a screening of the documentary *Miss-Representation*, and this year we're happy to sponsor it again. We're also proud to help establish the Congress of Women Library, by sponsoring the translation of touchstone works on women's issues, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* – which I believe will be available at the Congress itself – and Susan Faludi's *Backlash*.

I also said tonight's event is intergenerational. And it is.

I would also like to recognize a group of young women – as well as their parents and teachers – who have come from all across Poland to be in Warsaw this week. “Jestem Szefową” is a competition sponsored by the office of the Plenipotentiary of Equal Treatment.

Plenipotentiary Kozłowska-Rajewicz, we're honored to have you here tonight, and we're honored to host the finalists from "Jestem Szefową." These are 20 young women, middle school and high school age, who have written eloquently about their dreams and aspirations, about how they can break down barriers and stereotypes against girls and women.

We expect to see you all again in the near future, as political leaders, entrepreneurs, civic activists, and innovators. Congratulations!

Now we all know that there's a mountain of data out there that delivers a very clear message: when women do well, we all do well.

In fact, when women do well, we **all** do *better*.

In recent years, women around the world have made tremendous gains in political and economic rights. While we should be proud of that, we shouldn't be complacent.



As Secretary Clinton said at the Women and the Economy Summit last year: “Evidence of progress is not evidence of success.”

But tonight, I'm convinced we have both progress and success. You are an inspiration.

Congratulations again, and thank you.